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J. MICHAEL STRACZYNSKI'S
MIDNIGHT NATION
FRANK
GORDER

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Last Issue:

Detective David Grey, wounded during a murder investigation and nearly dead, awakes to find himself in a shadow version of our own world...here, but not here at all.

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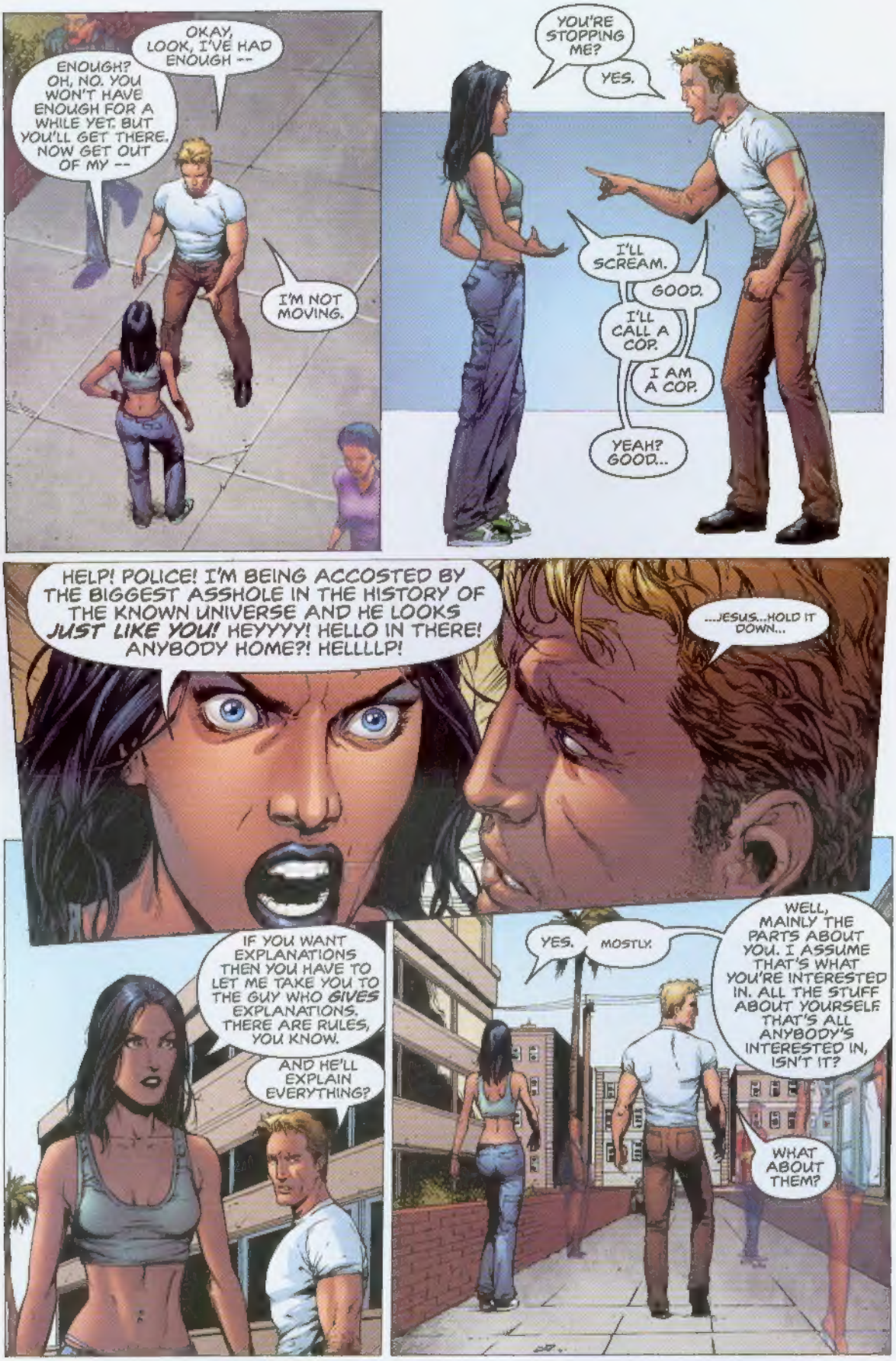
PRINTED IN CANADA

DAMN IT, I ASKED YOU A QUESTION.
I ALREADY ANSWERED IT. I CAN ANSWER IT AGAIN IF YOU LIKE.
LAUREL.
THE PLACE IN-BETWEEN.
UNTIL THEY FIND YOU AND KILL YOU.
OR UNTIL YOU TURN, IN WHICH CASE I'LL KILL YOU.
ARE YOU SURE YOU DON'T HAVE ANY NEW QUESTIONS, DAVID? I MEAN, WE CAN KEEP ANSWERING THE SAME ONES OVER AND OVER IF YOU WANT, BUT --
HOW DO YOU KNOW MY NAME?
WHY DO THEY ALWAYS ASK THE SAME QUESTIONS EVERY TIME?
I WAS SENT.
THAT'S NOT AN EXPLANATION.
NO, BUT IT IS AN ANSWER. MAYBE YOU NEED TO STOP LOOKING FOR EXPLANATIONS AND START LOOKING FOR ANSWERS.


OKAY, LOOK, I'VE HAD ENOUGH --
ENOUGH? OH, NO. YOU WON'T HAVE ENOUGH FOR A WHILE YET. BUT YOU'LL GET THERE. NOW GET OUT OF MY --
I'M NOT MOVING.
YOU'RE STOPPING ME?
YES.
I'LL SCREAM.
GOOD.
I'LL CALL A COP.
I AM A COP.
YEAH? GOOD...
HELP! POLICE! I'M BEING ACCOSTED BY THE BIGGEST ASSHOLE IN THE HISTORY OF THE KNOWN UNIVERSE AND HE LOOKS JUST LIKE YOU! HEYYYY! HELLO IN THERE! ANYBODY HOME?! HELLLLP!
...JESUS...HOLD IT DOWN...
IF YOU WANT EXPLANATIONS THEN YOU HAVE TO LET ME TAKE YOU TO THE GUY WHO GIVES EXPLANATIONS. THERE ARE RULES, YOU KNOW.
AND HE'LL EXPLAIN EVERYTHING?
YES.
MOSTLY.
WELL, MAINLY THE PARTS ABOUT YOU. I ASSUME THAT'S WHAT YOU'RE INTERESTED IN. ALL THE STUFF ABOUT YOURSELF. THAT'S ALL ANYBODY'S INTERESTED IN, ISN'T IT?
WHAT ABOUT THEM?

PET STORE
OH, THEM? DON'T WORRY, THEY CAN'T SEE YOU. AND YOU'LL STOP SEEING THEM SOON ENOUGH.
BUT HOW --
THAT'S ANOTHER EXPLANATION QUESTION. LIKE I SAID, I GIVE ANSWERS, NOT EXPLANATIONS.
HI, MAMA SIMMONS.
LAUREL? LAUREL, THAT YOU, GIRL?
YEAH, IT'S ME.
I DON'T BELIEVE IT. I THOUGHT FOR SURE YOU WERE DONE HERE.
ME TOO. JUST THE WAY IT IS, I GUESS.
I'M REAL SORRY TO HEAR THAT, LAUREL. SO WHO'S YOUR FRIEND?
THIS IS DAVID GREY. HE USED TO BE A POLICE LIEUTENANT. DAVID, THIS IS MAMA SIMMONS. SHE...SEES THINGS.
...OH, MY...
WHAT? WHAT'S WRONG?
OH... NOTHING SON...NOT A THING IN THE WORLD.

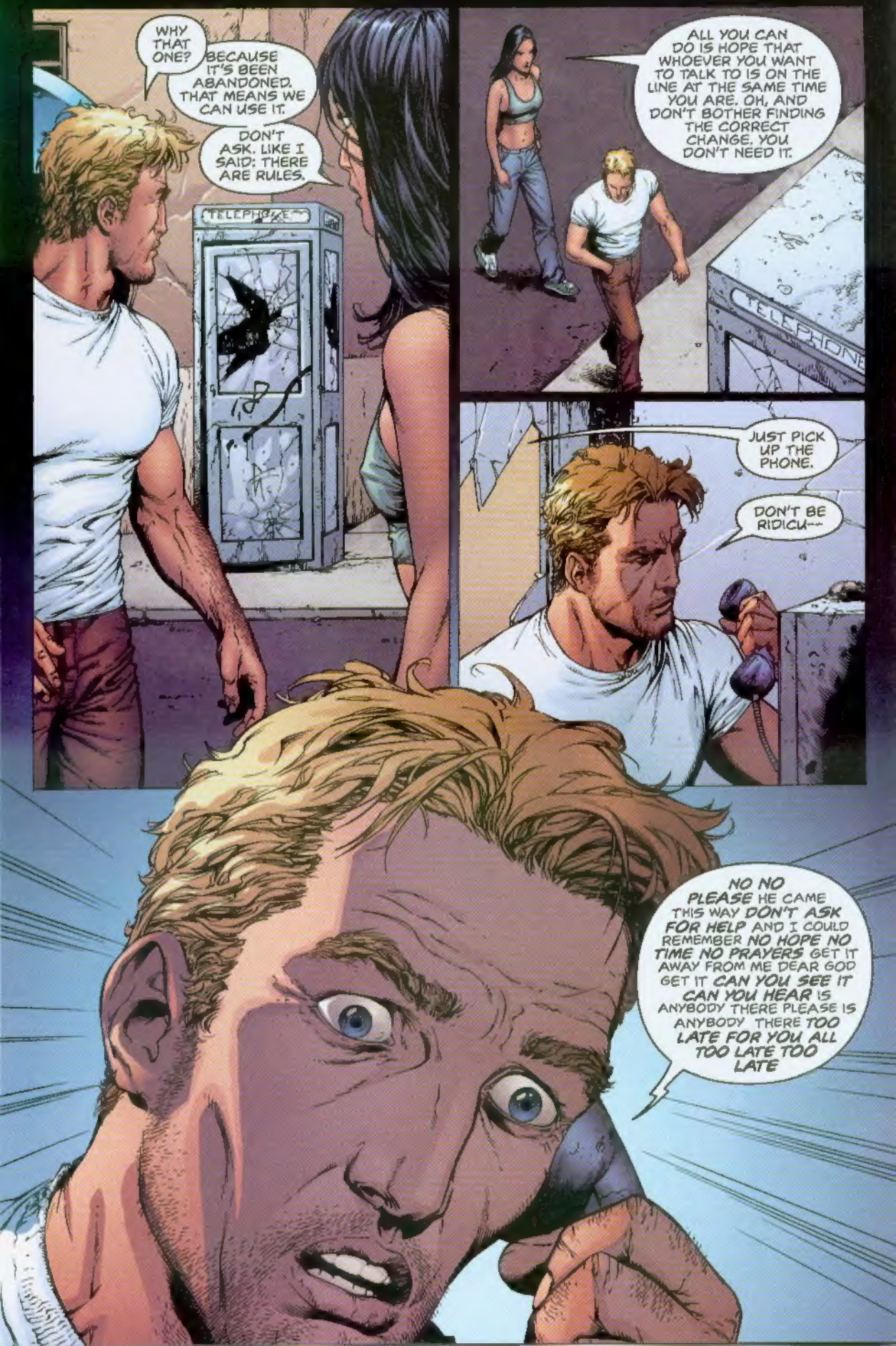
ANYWAY... WE HAVE TO GO.
I UNDERSTAND. YOU HAVE A NICE DAY, NOW, HONEY.
YOU WATCH YOUR BACK WITH THIS ONE, YOU HEAR?
I WILL, MAMA.
WHAT WAS THAT ALL AB--
WAIT, LET ME GUESS: THAT'S ANOTHER EXPLANATION QUESTION.
IT'S JUST SO CUTE WHEN THEY TRY TO THINK.
WHAT?
NOTHING.
YOU KNOW, I'M STILL NOT CONVINCED THIS ISN'T A DREAM...OR SOME KIND OF HALLUCINATION COOKED UP BY THE ANESTHETIC.
I COULD KICK YOU REAL HARD.
ASSAULTING A POLICE OFFICER IS A CRIMINAL OFFENSE.
NOT HERE. NOT IN-BETWEEN.
DRROOOOMMMM--
THEN WHAT ABOUT --
...SHIT...

MOVE!
HEY!
THAT VAN...I'VE SEEN IT BEFORE --
THE MEN. THE WALKERS.
THAT A LAST NAME?
ONLY NAME THEY'VE GOT.
OKAY, LOOK, I PLAYED ALONG, FIGURED I COULD GET SOME INFORMATION, BUT I'M TIRED OF BEING JERKED AROUND. NOW WHO OR WHAT THE HELL IS IN THAT VAN?
YOU KNOW WHO.
OR DON'T YOU REMEMBER WHAT HAPPENED?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, WHAT HAPPENED? I --
-- WAIT...

...GOD...
AM I...THIS IS STUPID, BUT AM I...DEAD?

NO. ALMOST. BUT NOT QUITE. NOT YET.
YOU'LL KNOW IT WHEN IT HAPPENS.

IT'S CLEAR. WE CAN MOVE ON.
LISTEN, I'M... HAVING KIND OF A HARD TIME HERE. I NEED TO --
PERFECT.
DIE PIG
IT WON'T WORK. YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO PICK IT UP.
WE'LL SEE.
STUPID PIECE OF... WHAT THE HELL'S WRONG WITH THIS THING?
YOU TALK TO THEM AND YOU TALK TO THEM BUT THEY NEVER LISTEN.
TRY THAT ONE. OVER THERE.


WHY THAT ONE?
BECAUSE IT'S BEEN ABANDONED. THAT MEANS WE CAN USE IT.
DON'T ASK. LIKE I SAID: THERE ARE RULES.
TELEPHONE
ALL YOU CAN DO IS HOPE THAT WHOEVER YOU WANT TO TALK TO IS ON THE LINE AT THE SAME TIME YOU ARE. OH, AND DON'T BOTHER FINDING THE CORRECT CHANGE. YOU DON'T NEED IT.
TELEPHONE
JUST PICK UP THE PHONE.
DON'T BE RIDICU--
NO NO PLEASE HE CAME THIS WAY DON'T ASK FOR HELP AND I COULD REMEMBER NO HOPE NO TIME NO PRAYERS GET IT AWAY FROM ME DEAR GOD GET IT CAN YOU SEE IT CAN YOU HEAR IS ANYBODY THERE PLEASE IS ANYBODY THERE TOO LATE FOR YOU ALL TOO LATE TOO LATE

HEY, LAZ.
LAUREL.
IS IT THERE YET?
NO... NOT YET. STILL DON'T SEE IT.
WELL, KEEP LOOKING.
I WILL. TAKE CARE
YOU TOO.
WHAT'S HE LOOKING FOR?
DON'T KNOW. NOBODY DOES, REALLY. BUT HE'S BEEN LOOKING FOR IT A LONG TIME. ARTHUR SAYS HE'S LOOKING FOR HIS OWN DEATH.
WHO'S ARTHUR?
YOU'LL SEE.
NO... NO SIGN OF IT.. NOT TODAY...NOT TODAY.

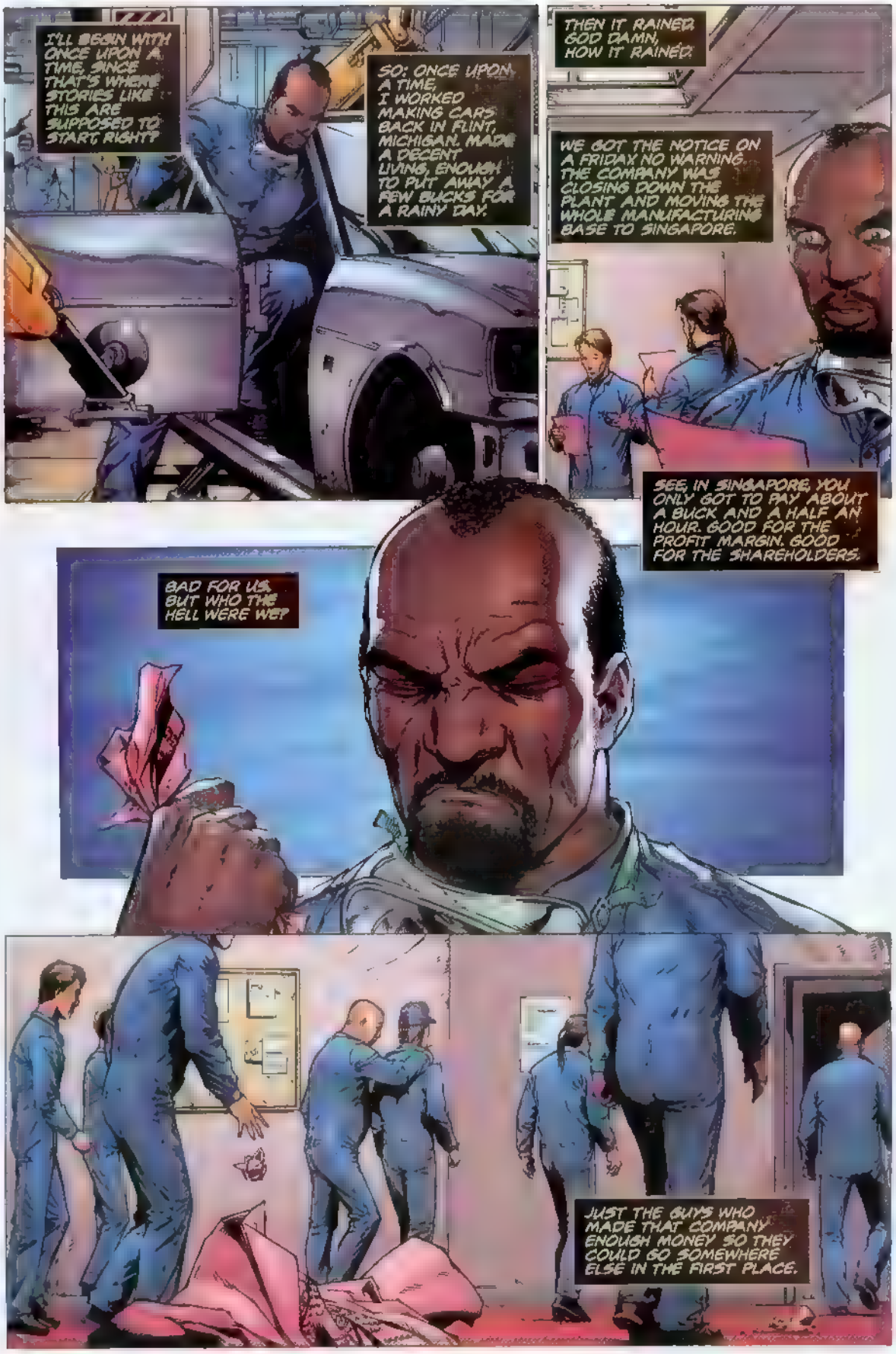
DON'T THINK I'VE EVER BEEN DOWN IN THIS PART OF TOWN.
I WOULDN'T IMAGINE SO. NO ONE COMES HERE. NO ONE BUT US. THAT'S WHY WE CAN USE IT.
HORSE
HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN HERE?
I GOT HERE WHEN YOU DID.
BUT YOU TALK LIKE YOU'VE BEEN HERE A LONG TIME.
FOREVER.
THEN HOW DO YOU --
THERE.
OH.

IS THAT WHERE WE'RE GOING?
YES.
KEEP OUT

...OH MAN..
HEY.
ARTHUR AROUND?
UHM... YEAH
GOOD.

LOOKS LIKE THEY'VE GOT A LOT OF RESPECT FOR YOU.
MMM...
ONE MIGHT EVEN SAY FEAR.
MMM...
CAREFUL, DON'T TRIP ON THE SUPPLIES.
SUPPLIES? T'S JUST A LOT OF CRAP.
HUH. MUST BE ONE OF THOSE "EYE OF THE BEHOLDER" THINGS I READ ABOUT IN THE NEWSPAPER ONCE.
WAS THAT SARCASM?
WOULDN'T DREAM OF IT.

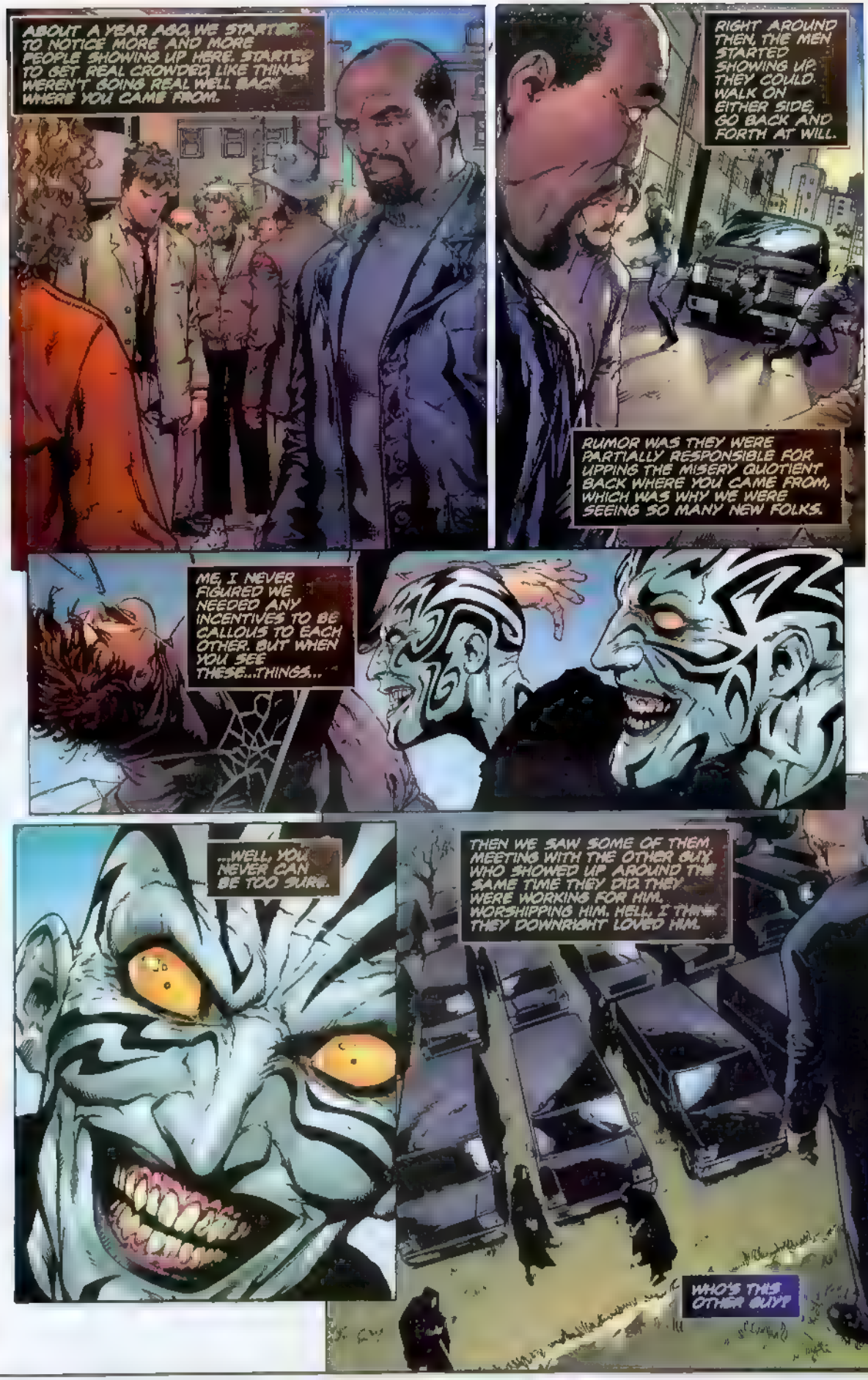
ARTHUR
LAUREL? BUT I THOUGHT YOU WERE --
YEAH, I'VE BEEN OVER THAT ALREADY.
THIS IS --
DAVID GREY, LIEUTENANT DETECTIVE, LAPD.
WE DON'T HAVE POLICE DOWN HERE, MR. GREY. LEAST, NOT THE SAME WAY YOU UNDERSTAND THAT CONCEPT.
WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO --
AND YOU DON'T INTERRUPT ME, AND YOU SURE AS HELL DON'T INTERRUPT LAUREL WHEN SHE'S TALKING. LAST GUY THAT TRIED, GOT SMOTE.
"SMOTE?"
I KEEP BUSY.
NOW HERE'S THE RULES.
ONE: I DON'T LIE. TWO DON'T PUSH ME TO TELL YOU MORE THAN I FEEL LIKE TELLING YOU. THREE: IF YOU DON'T LISTEN TO WHAT I SAY, YOU'LL DIE FAST, PAINFUL AND UGLY. FOUR: I GET TO MAKE UP NEW RULES WHENEVER I WANT.
NOW WAIT A --
YOU WANT AN EXPLANATION?
YES.
THEN GET COMFORTABLE.
YOU'RE GONNA LOVE THIS


I'LL BEGIN WITH ONCE UPON A TIME, SINCE THAT'S WHERE STORIES LIKE THIS ARE SUPPOSED TO START, RIGHT?
SO: ONCE UPON A TIME, I WORKED MAKING CARS BACK IN FLINT, MICHIGAN. MADE A DECENT LIVING, ENOUGH TO PUT AWAY A FEW BUCKS FOR A RAINY DAY.
THEN IT RAINED. GOD DAMN, HOW IT RAINED.
WE GOT THE NOTICE ON A FRIDAY. NO WARNING. THE COMPANY WAS CLOSING DOWN THE PLANT AND MOVING THE WHOLE MANUFACTURING BASE TO SINGAPORE.
SEE, IN SINGAPORE, YOU ONLY GOT TO PAY ABOUT A BUCK AND A HALF AN HOUR. GOOD FOR THE PROFIT MARGIN. GOOD FOR THE SHAREHOLDERS.
BAD FOR US. BUT WHO THE HELL WERE WE?
JUST THE GUYS WHO MADE THAT COMPANY ENOUGH MONEY SO THEY COULD GO SOMEWHERE ELSE IN THE FIRST PLACE.

THE COMPANY SAID THEY'D ARRANGE FOR "RE-TRAINING IN THE SERVICE INDUSTRY AT RATES COMPETITIVE WITH THE MARKET TODAY."
EXCEPT GUYS WHO FLIP BURGERS DON'T EARN MUCH MORE THAN THE FOLKS IN SINGAPORE THAT WERE SLAPPING OUR CARS TOGETHER NOW. COMPETITIVE MY ASS.
SO I HIT THE BRICKS. IF THERE WAS A JOB OPEN, I WAS THERE.
Appl
I WANTED TO WORK.
I WAS A HARD WORKER.
DIDN'T MATTER, THOUGH. EVERYWHERE I WENT, IT WAS THE SAME THING.
IT WAS LIKE THEY DIDN'T EVEN SEE ME.

RAINY DAY MONEY WASHED AWAY WITH THE RAIN. PRETTY SOON I WAS ON THE STREET. TRYING TO CATCH A BREAK.
WILL WORK FOR MONEY
NEVER CAUGHT ONE. NEVER EVEN SAW ONE.
WILL WORK FOR FOOD
IT WAS LIKE THEY DIDN'T EVEN SEE ME.
THEN, ONE DAY, I REALIZED THEY COULDN'T SEE ME.
AND AFTER A WHILE, I COULDN'T SEE THEM, EITHER.

WE'VE GOT A SAYING FOR IT. "ANOTHER ONE FELL THROUGH THE CRACKS IN THE S.DEWALK THIS AFTERNOON."
THE LOST. THE TURNED-AWAY. THE HOPELESS. THE HOMELESS. THE DISPOSSESSED, THE IGNORED, THE SCARED, THE TWISTED, THE CAST-AS.DE. THEY ROLL INTO THIS PLACE WITH ALL THE *OTHER* JUNK NOBODY WANTS ANYMORE.
HERE. THE PLACE IN-BETWEEN.
OH, IT'S THE SAME WORLD, ALL RIGHT. SAME GEOGRAPHY. SAME BUILD.NGS. BUT IT'S ON...ANOTHER LEVEL, I GUESS. THERE'S US *HERE*, AND THEM *THERE*, AND VERY FEW PO.NTS WHERE WE EVER CONNECT.
WE CAN ONLY INTERACT WITH WHAT'S BEEN LEFT BEHIND OR LOST, ABANDONED LIKE WE'VE BEEN ABANDONED. MOST OF IT'S DEAD TECH, BUT SOME OF IT WE CAN FIX, GET WORKING AGAIN. WE'VE BEEN WORKING ON THESE GENERATORS FOR ALMOST A YEAR NOW.
OKAY, WHOA, TIME OUT HERE.
I DON'T WANT TO APPEAR UNSYMPATHETIC, BECAUSE HELPING PEOPLE IS WHY I BECAME A COP IN THE FIRST PLACE --
YEAH, LAPD'S KNOWN FOR THAT HELPING STUFF
-- BUT WHAT DOES THIS HAVE TO DO WITH ME? I DIDN'T GO THROUGH ANY OF THAT, I HAVEN'T BEEN ABANDONED BY ANYBODY.
WELL, NOT LIKE THAT ANYWAY.
MAYBE. BUT I GOT A FLASH FOR YOU, LIEUTENANT DETECTIVE GREY. BAD OFF AS WE ARE, AIN'T *ONE* OF US WHO'D WANT TO TRADE PLACES WITH YOU, OR THE REASON YOU GOT BROUGHT ACROSS
TOLD YOU NOT TO INTERRUPT


ABOUT A YEAR AGO, WE STARTED TO NOTICE MORE AND MORE PEOPLE SHOWING UP HERE. STARTED TO GET REAL CROWDED, LIKE THINGS WEREN'T GOING REAL WELL BACK WHERE YOU CAME FROM.
RIGHT AROUND THEN, THE MEN STARTED SHOWING UP. THEY COULD WALK ON EITHER SIDE, GO BACK AND FORTH AT WILL.
RUMOR WAS THEY WERE PARTIALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR UPPING THE MISERY QUOTIENT BACK WHERE YOU CAME FROM, WHICH WAS WHY WE WERE SEEING SO MANY NEW FOLKS.
ME, I NEVER FIGURED WE NEEDED ANY INCENTIVES TO BE CALLOUS TO EACH OTHER. BUT WHEN YOU SEE THESE...THINGS...
...WELL, YOU NEVER CAN BE TOO SURE.
THEN WE SAW SOME OF THEM MEETING WITH THE OTHER GUY, WHO SHOWED UP AROUND THE SAME TIME THEY DID. THEY WERE WORKING FOR HIM. WORSHIPPING HIM. HELL, I THINK THEY DOWNRIGHT LOVED HIM.
WHO'S THIS OTHER GUY?

WHO'S THE OTHER GUY?
YEAH.
UH, OH.
EXCUSE ME, DO I LOOK LIKE A PHYSICIST TO YOU?
NO, BUT --
DO I LOOK LIKE A THEOLOGIAN TO YOU?
NO --
THEN HOW THE HELL SHOULD I KNOW WHO OR WHAT THE HELL HE IS?
YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE THE MAN WITH THE EXPLANATIONS.
YEAH, AND I EXPLAIN WHAT I KNOW. I DON'T EXPLAIN WHAT I DON'T KNOW. ONLY THING I KNOW IS THAT HE SCARES THE SHIT OUT OF ME AND I'M JUST WAITING TO SEE YOUR SORRY ASS GET THE TREATMENT.
WHAT TREATMENT?
HE BEEN LIKE THIS THE WHOLE TIME?
PRETTY MUCH.
I'M REAL SORRY.
YEAH, WELL, LUCK OF THE DRAW, I GUESS.
WHAT TREATMENT?

OKAY..LOOK, I'M SORRY I YELLED. IT'S JUST...I'M NOT REAL GOOD ON THIS GIVING BAD NEWS STUFF
NEAR AS WE CAN FIGURE, THE MEN ARE IN-BETWEENERS BECAUSE THEY GOT A CONNECTION TO BOTH SIDES. THE OTHER GUY BROUGHT THEM HERE AGAINST THEIR WILL.
HOW?
HE TOOK THEIR SOUL. TOOK WHAT MADE THEM HUMAN. WHEN THAT HAPPENS, THEY SHOW UP HERE, LOOKING JUST LIKE YOU.
BUT INSIDE A YEAR, ELEVEN MONTHS TOPS...THEY TURN INTO WHAT YOU SAW TOPSIDE
BOTTOM LINE: THEY TOOK YOUR SOUL. AND YOU GOT LESS THAN A YEAR TO GET IT BACK. 'CAUSE IF YOU DON'T, YOU'LL BE DEAD OR YOU'LL BE ONE OF THE MEN.
AND IF YOU ASK ME, YOU'D BE BETTER OFF DEAD.

TO BE CONTINUED

e-mail: thecow@topcow.com
To Hell and Inbetween
PREVIEW OF ISSUE 3
JOE'S COMICS
FRANK GORDER

MIDNIGHT NATION

MIDNIGHT NATION

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J. MICHAEL STRACZYNSKI'S

MIDNIGHT NATION

m i d n i g h t n a t i o n s t a t i o n

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midnightnation@topcow.com

I've put up a fan website to J. Michael Straczynski's new comic Midnight Nation, called the Midnight Nation Station.

http://www.jmscomics.com/mns/index.html

I really enjoy JMS's writing, and am very glad that he has been able to enter the medium of comics to share more of his stories with us. I'll be updating my site as each issue is released (or as much as Real Life allows).

HEIDI BERTHIAUME

Hey, Heidi! I checked out the site! It looks really cool! I can't wait to see it as we get more of the series out! Thanks for all the love!

Well guys, you've got me. I was hooked from the first panel, and it only got better from there. I can't wait for the next issue, and I'm dying for the trade of Rising Stars to come out so I can start reading that book (I don't want to start with #9, that'd be like cheating). Joe, I'll read whatever you write at this point, but you've gotta promise me something...If there won't be any more episodes of Crusade, finish the story in comic form. Either way, thanks for a great first issue.

Gary Frank, Jason Gorder, Robin Spehar and Dennis Heisler... you guys did a fantastic job, as well!

IN DISTINCT ADMIRATION,
BRYANT BURNETTE

Ahh, another Crusade fan! JMS himself answered the question of if we were going to be doing a comic book in the Rising Stars letters column. He said, "No, because Crusade is owned by Warner Bros. (every series is owned by the studio, not the person who creates it), and we don't have those rights." So, we're sorry but there will be no Crusade comic. But we've got great stuff coming up so I promise, you won't be disappointed with Joe's Comics!

Not sure how to get a message to Joe himself, so I thought I'd try here - First of all, let me say that with a name like "Joe's" , it's got to be good! I was lucky enough to hear Joe speak at Wizard World this year and really found him to be wonderful. As a writer myself, he gave me a lot to think about in that talk, and I could see how his attitude and hard work have made him successful. I went to see him based on his work on "Rising Stars", a well written comic - just like they should be! I am really pleased to say he has done it again -"Midnight Nation" was a great read, with a good premise for a comic book. I am sure it will be one of my favorites from here on out. It is great to see well-written comics and even better to see that Joe will be doing genres that comics really need to get back to - supernatural stuff here, and a science fiction book, per his interview. I'm looking forward to it. Joe's Comics, huh? Guess it's been done now and I can't use it.

THANKS
JOE (OF COURSE) MUSZYNSKI

You can spell it differently maybe, like Joez Comics . It's a stretch but I'm sure you can find a way to make it work! Well, now I'm sure Joe's read your letter... along with thousands of others worldwide! Glad to hear you enjoyed the panel in Chicago! Hopefully, we'll see you there again next year!

i loooove midnight nation!

AWESOMBLOSOM
VIA E-MAIL

Short sweet and to the point!

Finally, the long awaited Midnight Nation! When I first heard about Midnight Nation bout a half a year ago I thought :

What could possibly go wrong with this comic book? Joe Michael Straczynski and Gary Frank in 1 comic for only $2.50?

And nothing went wrong! The attention to detail by both Gary and Joe are absolutely fantastic. I mean, David has a character, a history, a past. The book is very realistic, you'd almost think someone on this earth is in this situation, and since Joe writes such realistic stories what better artist could you pick than Gary Frank? And as bonus, as if the book wasn't wonderful enough, the pencilled only pages for #2! Dan has done a great job on the colors as well as Laura's cover! A nice addition was the Laurel pages that fit together! Joe and Gary got me hooked for the 11 upcoming issues!

LATER
TOM "ERNIE THE SEAHORSE" LODDER
ZWOLLE, THE NETHERLANDS

Excellent! Yes, we got a lot of mail regarding the fold over pages! I'll have to have JMS coin the name for that in comic book story form. I'll get on that! Hope you enjoyed the second issue as more than the first! We have a preview included for #3 as well.

I have got to say that this book is one of the best that I've ever read. When I finished that last page, I was ready to do whatever I had to get the next issue. It left me on the very last edge of my seat. I can't wait to see what "Joe" busts out next!

JAMES
VIA E-MAIL

Me either, James! And check out the preview to see what Gary Frank "busted out" for #3!

Well, we're off and rolling! Two issues down and we've got a lost soul already. Keep writing me, guys! I like attention. Also, remember we love fan art! Get me your stuff and you too can see your name in print! We'll see you in four weeks with the next issue!

RENAE